

Association of Bay Area Governments in 1974

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ABAG tackles new problems, finds innovative solutions

In the past few years, local governments have achieved through ABAG an adopted Regional Plan, a Water, Sewerage and Drainage Plan and an Open Space Plan. Through such efforts, the Bay Area has also become the first region in the state with an Airport Systems Plan and an Ocean Coastline Plan.

In addition, ABAG and its local governments began to implement policies for managing the Bay Area's growth.

Major gains last year

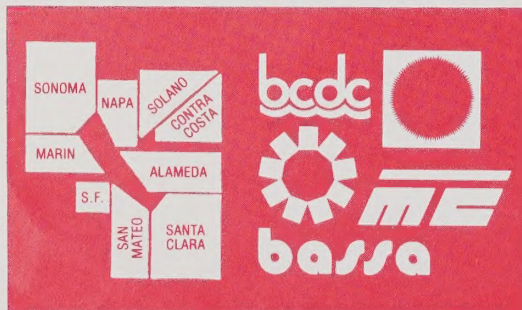
But we have not stopped there. During 1974, ABAG showed new strength and responsiveness in dealing with a wide variety of physical and social planning problems.

Major accomplishments included:

- Adoption by the General Assembly of a broad economic policy resolution as part of ABAG's growth policy. The policies were drawn up by the Regional Planning Committee, headed by former Marin County Supervisor (now Assemblyman) Michael Wornum. ABAG's city-centered growth management policies were honored by an award from the Bay Area Council for "outstanding environmental enhancement."
- Publication of the *Regional Housing Plan, Phase 1*, containing important new policies to help assure the provision of adequate housing throughout the Bay Area.

- Creation of a system of review panels to assess development proposals with a potentially significant impact on the region.
- Publication of population and employment forecasts to assist in local decisions. Reactions to this series were assessed and will be reflected in the next series of forecasts.
- Extension of the joint work program with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the California Department of Transportation, reducing duplication.

These advances were not achieved without significant, sometimes immense, effort by dedicated local officials serving on ABAG committees, as well as by the staff. Not many regional planning agencies in the nation have to deal on a day-to-day basis with a hundred local governments, many regional and sub-regional organizations, hundreds of special districts and a population greater than 36 of the nation's states.



Key legislation

ABAG helped strengthen AB 2040 by Assemblyman John Knox to implement a long-standing policy for a genuinely comprehensive regional planning agency.

The bill to consolidate ABAG with MTC, the Bay Area Sewage Services Agency, the Bay Area Air Pollution Control District and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission passed the Assembly, but was rejected in the Senate Local Government Committee, despite strong endorsements from local governments.

ABAG anticipates similar legislative proposals in 1975. Together with officials from other regional agencies, President Warren Boggess and Executive Director Revan Tranter are working to develop recommendations on comprehensive regional planning legislation.

Housing plan

ABAG's Regional Housing Plan is an example of the serious thinking local governments are doing on regional issues. The plan and its supplementary documents were the results of two years' work by the Regional Housing Task Force, and contain policies and information that will assist local governments in applying for federal funds under the 1974 community development legislation.

The plan recommends a "fair share" allocation system for distributing the region's housing subsidies, taking into account such critical factors as local need, fiscal capacity, environmental quality and access to employment.

ABAG last year began a partnership for designing new ways to plan and deliver human services such as employment, education, health and supportive activities. This project will enhance the ability of local government in assuming new human services responsibilities.

The project is one of several begun in the Human Services Division, which before 1974 existed only in skeleton form. Its other new projects include improved coordination between employment training programs

and job availability, health planning with the Bay Area Comprehensive Health Planning Council to assist counties in planning for emergency medical services and to improve estimates of health services needs, and criminal justice planning with county criminal justice boards.

A year ago, too, the Environmental Resources Division was embryonic. But during 1974, the division assisted the Regional Open Space Task Force in preparing Phase III of the Regional Open Space Plan Element, which represents a trend-setting and strengthened approach to environmental resources planning by describing "areas of critical environmental concern."



Other activities in the division last year included preparation—as part of the joint program with MTC—for a substantial update of the Regional Airport Systems Plan and the start of regional seaport planning. Major applied research in Sonoma County to demonstrate ways to link land use planning with air and water quality goals was begun. The study coincides with work on the county general plan and city general plans in the area.

Air quality management

ABAG joined with MTC in a cooperative effort to develop a parking management plan for the Bay Area—one method to help implement national air quality goals. Because of the likely effects of new air quality regulations on local government, ABAG expects to play an increasing role in air quality management for the Bay Area.

ABAG also co-sponsored an experimental carpool matching program for Bay Area commuters, to help meet clean air requirements and the energy crisis. Because of the concern with energy needs, the annual General Assembly considered planning strategies for energy-efficient communities. ABAG cited the City of Pittsburg for the most effective energy conservation program in the region.

Another highlight during 1974 included an award to ABAG from the American Institute of Planners for the Regional



Ocean Coastline Plan. This plan became a basis for coastal planning by the North Central Coastal Commission in Sonoma, Marin and San Francisco Counties under an agreement developed through the Ocean Coastline Planning Committee, chaired by Vice President Lenard Grote of Pleasant Hill. Under the guidance of the ABAG/MTC Joint Policy Committee headed by Antioch Councilman Louise Giersch, ABAG began a major study of land use and transportation issues in the San Mateo coastal corridor.

ABAG also established a new Citizen Alliance Program—now emerging as a useful way to involve the region's citizens in policy issues—and created a Citizen Services Committee headed by Newark Mayor James Balentine to oversee the program. Some of the first projects included a day-long workshop on the region's housing problems, an expedition into the foothills to learn about clear water creeks in the Bay Area's natural environment and a slide show for Spanish-speaking citizens on the planning process

and how it affects their lives.

In 1974, the agency also began developing a regional information system on a variety of natural and man-made hazards such as floods, earthquakes and oil spills. The program is funded by the Defense Civil Preparedness Agency, and will assist local officials in making effective preparations for disasters likely in their jurisdictions.

State funding was obtained for the Bay Delta Resources Recovery Project, which will be an innovative demonstration of how to use composted solid wastes to restore levees on Delta islands. The Bay Delta board, headed by Oakland Councilman Fred Maggiora, is attempting to secure necessary federal funds to begin the project.

In spite of these projects—and all the others completed during ABAG's 14-year history—many people feel a sense of despair—that nothing is getting better despite the best efforts to make life easier or more bearable. Undoubtedly, the future will bring more problems, but inroads *are* being made on those that exist. The air is cleaner, and so is the water. Widespread human problems are at last being confronted. The environment has not been destroyed. Growth has begun to be managed. The San Francisco Bay Area remains one of the most exciting and livable areas in the country. And local governments are playing their part—regionally—to keep it so.



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